political prisoners have been held without charge or trial under special or preventive detention law ; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The allegations are considered to be factually incorrect and baseless. Moreover, Amnesty International in its report have not furnished details about the alleged 25,000 political prisoners. Therefore, no further comments or details can be furnished.

Deployment of Army in Punjab

2161. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that army was deployed in various parts of Punjab during the last year to protect the local populace from militants ;

(b) if so, the number of officers and Jawans deployed in Punjab at that time ;

(c) whether it is a fact that armed forces have been withdrawn from many such places during the last few months ;

(d) if so, what are the details thereof, and the reasons therefor ;

(e) whether Government have made elaborate security arrangements at such places ; and

(f) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB) : (a) The army has been deployed in Punjab to assist the civil Administration in containing militancy in the State.

(b) It will not be in the National Security interest to reveal details of troops deployed in aid to Civil Admn. in Punjab.

(c) and (d) The army has not been withdrawn from Punjab and continues to provide assistance to civil Admn. as hithertofore. The deployment is in consonance with the assessed threat from the terrorists.

(e) and (f) Not applicable in the light of continued army involvement outlined above.

Custody deaths

2162. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been consistent rise in the number of deaths in police custody in various States and Union Territories over the years ;

(b) whether Government have taken cognisance of a recent order of the Calcutta High Court directing for the review of all cases of custodial deaths in the State of West Bengal since 1977 ;

(c) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto ; and

(d) the steps contemplated, if any, stop custodial deaths in future in the country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M.M. JACOB) : (a) 'Public Order' and 'Police', including 'Crime;' being State subjects, it is primarily for the State Governments to deal with cases of deatks in police custody. Information on this subject is not